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THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, MARCH 23, 1850.

For the National Era.

JAMES H. PERKINS.

As if amid the countless noise of summer,  
Strangely lighted, flamed, and blazed as they fell,  
Came to a thousand hearts the voice of summer,  
Ringing its golden, unexpected knell.  
Hundreds of those who saw or knew him never—  
Although unused such sympathy to lend—  
Knowing his life of high and pure endeavor,  
Mourning at the tidings of his hapless end,  
And that in his death they too had lost a friend.

"The evil that men do lives after them,"  
The good is oft interred with their bones;  
It is the curse of Shakespeare's wisdom turned to laughter, then,  
Since even Slander dare not raise her throne,  
What means this strong, unassuming expression  
Of sorrowing reverence for the holy dead?  
This longing yearning which we feel to breathe  
Memory's pale perfume round his dying bed?  
As though such falling flowers could consolation shed?

Why was it, when the sudden tidings came,  
That earth claimed him for her own again,  
Through the great city sorrow like a blast,  
Uplifting truth and right against the False and Wrong,  
And his name was breathed in the hearts of men?  
No brother knew this, of Montezuma;  
He never fought a nation's unjust quarrel,  
He never took a nation's name for a prey,  
No selfish purpose ever stained his name,  
And finally eye to eye with the Great God,  
The Godlike, the immortal, was his goal—  
For lower aims he made no compromise;  
Earth's phantom glories never yet outlasted  
This warrior-soldier of God and follower of Christ.

But many a mother, watching the night sleep,  
Has felt the death of her only child,  
Heard the heavy sigh of remorse and grief,  
Cheered by his voice so earnest and so mild;  
Many a dying man has raised his head,  
And felt a throbbing heart once more,  
When, looking on his pale face, he saw  
Heard that welcome footstep at the door,  
And felt that faithful wife less gloomy than before.

Alas! that he who lived to bless mankind,  
Was forced to struggle with a fearful Fate—  
That nameless tortures racked that noble mind,  
Till life grew terrible and doleful;  
Brave was the combat with that strange life-sorrow,  
And hero-like with tears are all too true,  
The youth and night with the morning,  
And through a lonely and mysterious doom  
Thy soul has risen up triumphant from the tomb!

He who lived not for glory needs no praise;  
Of what avail were epigrams to him?  
The words would scarce adorn a stranger's case,  
And hero-like with tears are all too true,  
Oh! let me marble countess at his head,  
No brass nor iron his memorial be—  
His name live in his granite rocks he fed,  
His name live in his granite rocks he fed,  
Stamped on the archives of God and Earth's Eternity.

Ye Western rivers, to his soul so dear,  
His full parental let your waters be,  
And bear him stately to his ocean-bay,  
Beneath the glowing billows of the sea!  
The sea and sky and earth and air shall know  
While tempests sweep unheeded o'er the dead—  
The great sea never had a nobler guest,  
Nor Christian hero a more fitting bed,  
For wide and deep his soul as Ocean's ever beat!

These lines, unworthy of the name they bear,  
Are the expression of a heart that aches  
More for his noble life and spirit rare,  
The blessing of his memory it knows—  
Which seeing once no Father thought above,  
Without a hope, a future, or a home,  
Learned from his earnest lips that "God is Love,"  
The solemn lesson of existence, come,  
And now, like him, his life less real than that beyond.

H. B. B.

Cincinnati, March 10, 1850.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.

BY MRS. EMMA D. E. SOUTHWORTH.

BOOK SECOND.

IV.

THINK OLD MAN'S DARLING.

The more that I think of his bloom,  
The blonder his hair grows, the sweeter his smile,  
Christopher Smith's Song of David.

Louise recovered from her fainting fit to find her mother gone. All night she wept bitterly. The next morning she awoke pale and hollow-eyed. She wrote a letter full of the tenderest expressions of filial affection, and sent it to Mont Crystal. This letter was returned with the seal unbroken. Then she would have set out for Mont Crystal immediately, but a thunder-storm arising—a violent equinoctial storm—lasting all the afternoon and evening, prevented her. The next day, from the flood, the roads were impassable for carriages, and Louise could not ride to her mother. She was forced to content herself with writing another and more earnest and impassioned letter to her mother. The second letter, like the first, was returned unopened—and Louise went to bed and wept herself to sleep.

General Stuart-Gordon had ridden over to the Crags that afternoon, to pass the evening with Brighty. It was very late when he returned. He entered the wainscoted parlor with a singularly light and brisk step, threw off his coat, drew on his wadded gown, and settled himself comfortably in his study-chair by the side of the table to read the papers that had arrived in the evening's mail. Running his eyes over the columns, his attention was arrested by the following advertisement:

"NEXT OF KIN.

Of the heirs of Riley Frohisher O'Reilly, of Athlone, county of Westmeath, Ireland, he yet living, and should see this advertisement, they are requested to report themselves to James Frohisher, Secretary of Legation to the British Embassy at Washington, where they will hear something to their advantage."

"Riley Frohisher O'Reilly, late of Athlone? Why, he was the father of my Brighty—this concerns my Brighty," thought the General, reading over the advertisement again. "Will he hear something to their advantage?"—to her advantage—

"What means that? That means that a fortune is left her, if it means anything! Oh, Brighty! shall I lose you at last? Shall she lose the privilege of making your future prosperous be taken from me? But this is selfish! I said her happiness was dearer to me than anything else, yet now I am alarmed at a piece of good fortune promised her; yet, after all, this may be a mistake. I will write at once, and ascertain what this means."

And, turning around to his writing-table, he penned a hasty letter of inquiry to the Secretary of Legation, and, ringing for Apollo, bade him, like as it was, to take a horse, and take it to the post office, that it might go out in the morning's mail.

"It will then be two days before I can receive an answer," thought the General, as he retired to bed, but not to sleep.

Two days elapsed—a week passed away—General Stuart-Gordon had received no answer yet to his letter to the British Secretary of Legation.

He had not failed to mention the advertisement to Britannia, but she took it so quietly—seemed to think it of so little importance—that his fears had been set at rest; and, indeed, his respect had prevented him from expressing to Britannia an uneasiness for which at heart he condemned himself. He had even grown to think that the notice might possibly have reference to some one else.

Upon the second week after the family quarrel, one evening, as soon as Louise had, weeping, left the oak parlor, and as soon as Louise had, sympathizing, followed her, General Stuart-Gordon, putting on his dressing-gown and slippers, and sinking into his easy-chair, began to make himself comfortable by stretching out his feet and resting them upon the fire-iron, and drawing his candle-stick laden with papers to his side. He had scarcely commenced reading, when Apollo rode up to the door, and, jumping from his horse, entered the room with the following:

"Give them to me, Apollo!" said the General, dropping his paper; and Apollo, undrawing the strings of the bag, and taking hold of the bottom by the corners, shook the letters out.

There were letters from exporting-grains and to-bacco merchants of Baltimore and New York; there were political letters; and there was one that was immediately torn open and read. It bore the Washington post-mark. It was from James Frohisher, Esquire, Secretary of the British Embassy from the Court of St. James, to Washington. It ran thus:

WASHINGTON, April 30, 18—

To General Stuart-Gordon:

Sir: Yours of the 20th April is at hand. The advertisement of the heirs of Riley O'Reilly in the Intelligence of the 10th April, to which your letter alludes, relates to the following facts, which I beg to state to you:

Riley O'Reilly, late Earl of Clonmoch, died at Castle Clonmoch, near Athlone, county of Westmeath, Ireland, on the 22d of April, 1849, aged ninety years. He died intestate, and without heirs, leaving the daughter of the late Riley O'Reilly, the youngest son of the Earl's fourth son, as his heir.

If this young lady live in the person of Miss Britanna O'Reilly, and can prove her identity, she is sole heiress to the late Earl's titles and estates, and Countess of Clonmoch in her own right. I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon you, in relation to this subject, in the course of the week.

Sir, yours, most respectfully,

JAMES FROHISHER.

The letter dropped from the hands of General Stuart-Gordon, and a mortal coldness and weakness seized his frame; his heart sunk.

"This is a blow! Just Heaven! this is a blow! Within three days of my marriage, too!"

And he arose and walked up and down the floor, with his hands clasped behind his back, and his head bowed upon his bosom, as was his custom when troubled.

"Well! well! well! well! this is severe! This is heavy! I will no longer have a reason for marrying a man old enough to be my father—and yet I would have made her happy! I feel that I should have done so! But it is over, it is over, this last, dream! Countess of Clonmoch! Oh, Brighty, all will, all will you ever meet with one who will cherish you tenderly as I have done!"

General Stuart-Gordon did not go to bed that night. Early the next morning, without saying one word upon the subject to any member of his family, he took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following note to Britannia:

ISLE OF RAYS, May 1.

DEAREST BRITANNIA: Let your most earnest and sincere friend be the first to wish you joy in your dawn of fortune. I have just received a letter from the Secretary of Legation, and am pleased to be the first to announce to you the brilliant change that awaits you—to be the first to address you by your new title.

There! that is as far as I can go, and as much as I can do for Britannia. I cannot offer you my congratulations in person; I have no strength to do so. I am stricken, Brighty—I am stricken.

Like the slave in the Brazilian mines, I have found a diamond of the first water, only to see it smothered from me, and set in a coronet!

When I found a young, beautiful, accomplished, and amiable girl, alone and unprotected, a girl of elegant manners and refined tastes, exposed to all the evils of an unsettled life, I had thought to take that girl to my bosom, and by cherishing her tenderly, to have made her happy and won her affections.

But all this is changed now. The Countess of Clonmoch has a splendid destiny before her. The diamond will blaze all the more brilliantly when set in the coronet; Britannia will lead lustre even to the high rank she will reach.

Brighty, for me you are Brighty, and no Countess—Brighty, in three days more we were to have been married. I know the strict integrity of your heart, and I know that you would have kept your engagement under all circumstances; and I need not say my dearest Britannia, I wish you joy. God bless you, my dear Brighty.

I enclose you the letter of the Secretary of Legation. There will be no difficulty in proving your identity; and I need not say my dearest Britannia, that I am at your command always, to render any service in my power.

Your friend, as ever,

CATHERINE STUART-GORDON.

He folded, sealed, and directed this letter, and calling Apollo, bade him saddle a horse, and take it to the Crags.

Louise kept her room with a nervous headache all that day. Two weeks of crying had completely exhausted the delicate girl.

Louise came to the Crags looking disturbed. General Stuart-Gordon told him, gravely, to take comfort.

"That will do you no good, my dear General," he replied by the sacrifice of one member of any family, and that that member would probably be himself. And, without explaining his meaning further, General Stuart-Gordon left the oak parlor, and shut himself up alone in his library, trying to read a Hebrew dictionary, placed upside down before him. He did not go down to dinner.

Soon after dinner, Apollo Belvidere returned from his errand to the Crags, and rapped at the door of the library.

"Come in," groaned the General.

And Apollo came in, bowing and scraping, and holding his hat in one hand and a little note in the other.

"Did you find the young lady?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, how was she—how was the family?"

"Well, sir, they are as-a-tinny at the table, sir, and old Major Somerville, sir, he was a prophesying of the Bible, sir."

"Well, what is that you have in your hand—a letter?"

"Yes, sir."

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"Will General Stuart-Gordon favor Britannia O'Reilly with an interview this evening?"

That was all.

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In half an hour, General Stuart-Gordon was on his road to the Crags. In two hours, he had arrived.

The family had just arisen from tea. Major Somerville, as usual, had retired to rest. Louise and Britannia were sewing, and Anne was reading "Paradise and the Peri" aloud to them. Anne, as was her invariable custom, as soon as a visitor entered, arose and withdrew. General Stuart-Gordon advanced, bowing.

"Good evening, my dear Miss Somerville!" he said, pressing Stuart's hand. Then going to Britannia, "How shall I address you now, madam, in offering again and in person my earnest congratulations upon the splendid fortune opening before you?" he asked, in a very low voice.

Britannia arose from her seat, giving him her hand and looking at him with a smile.

"My dear Miss Somerville, I wish to converse alone with General Stuart-Gordon for a few minutes, if you will give me leave."

Susan smilingly arose, and left the room.

Britannia resumed her seat, pointing out a chair on the opposite corner of the fire-place to the General. He took it, seated himself, and, drawing up his portly form, and throwing one arm over the back of the chair, addressed his companion as follows:

"Well, Britannia, I said that I was at your command, and accordingly, when you summoned me to your presence I lost no time in obeying you, though I could hardly have believed that you had so much to say to me."

"You have heard me the pain of this interview—at least for a few days—at least until I had in some measure recovered from the shock of this most heavy blow, and regained a portion of my calmness and self-control. However, Britannia, I am here, and ready to serve you."

All this time, Britannia had sat quite still, looking down upon her own now jeweled hands, and lay one upon the other, as if in deep thought. She did not speak, even now that she had finished his sentence.

"Well, Britannia, what do you wish to do first? How can I assist you? Tell me, I am quite at your orders. Why do you not reply, Britannia?"

"I do not wish anything done until after Sunday, General," said Britannia. General Stuart-Gordon started—looked at her earnestly. Sunday was to have been their wedding day.

"Oh, Britannia! But this allusion is thoughtless or wanton on your part!"

"Why, General! Have we not enough to keep us busy until Sunday? After Sunday, can we not take Baltimore and Washington in our route?"

"Oh, Britannia, cease to torture me! You know that this is all changed!—all—all!"

"Then you do really mean to break with me, General?"

"I do really mean to release you from your engagement to myself, Britannia."

"And upon what account?"

"Upon account of the new and brilliant position which you occupy, and which I am proud to see you occupy. I told you my reasons in my letter. Britannia arose from her seat, and, coming around, rested her hand upon the back of his chair, while she asked, gravely:

"My friend, why did you write that letter to me?"

"Brighty, oh, Brighty! all is over. You know that I feel it too well—too surely—too powerfully!"

"And my friend, this grows very serious. Explain yourself!" said Britannia, very gravely.

"Britannia, my letter explained this. Do not affect to misunderstand me!"

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